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ALASKA BROWN BEARS  
TO BE PROTECTED

Plans for the management and perpetuation of the famous brown bear of Admiralty Island, Alaska, were announced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, today.

The plan, worked up cooperatively by the Forest Service, the Biological Survey, and the Alaska Game Commission, seeks primarily to coordinate the management of the bear population with a well-rounded use and enjoyment of other commercial, recreational, and scenic resources of the Island.

Principal features of the bear management plan include the following:

Areas needed for protection of the bear will be closed to hunting. Closed areas will be extended, or replaced by others, as changing conditions warrant. In general, closed areas will include general recreation areas; areas with outstanding heavy stocking of bear in the spring when the cubs are small; small, heavily-stocked areas easily accessible where bears can be observed by naturalists, photographers, and the general public; and lands in the vicinity of logging camps, trollers' camps, and other centers of seasonal occupancy, where closure may be advisable to assist in controlling casual or illegal killing.

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Limited bear hunting may be permitted, subject to bag limits and to closure for entire seasons or parts of seasons to prevent jeopardizing the bear population. Permitted yearly kill will never be allowed to exceed the yearly net increase.

A system of trails, portages, shelter cabins, and observation blinds will be constructed for the benefit of naturalists and recreationists. Some of these already have been completed, with the aid of CCC workers.

An attempt will be made to increase the bear population if further studies show that this will not result in overstocking.

Under existing game laws, shooting from power boats, or the use of dogs in taking game animals, is not allowed, and the sale of pelts is prohibited. A resident may kill a brown or grizzly bear when necessary to protect persons or property.

Admiralty Island is especially adapted to the management of the bear in coordination with other resources, according to the Forest Service. The location of its commercially valuable timber stands and salmon streams and canneries near tidewater leaves a vast interior region of nearly 700,000 acres into which there is no necessity for woods workers to penetrate. This interior region of muskeg, scrub timber, and alder and willow thickets is preferred by the bears at certain seasons of the year. Admiralty Island, with a total area of 1,065,000 acres, is a part of the Tongass National Forest, one of the two great national forests of Alaska, and the largest in the national forest system.

The Alaska brown bear, for which Admiralty Island is famous, is one of the largest bears of the world. Specimens weighing 1600 pounds have been noted. Five species of large bears have been differentiated on Admiralty Island by Dr. C. Hart Merriam, first chief of the Biological Survey and a noted authority on these animals. The animals spend about five months of the year in hibernation, during which period the cubs are born. They spend most of the summer season in the higher country of the interior, except for frequent excursions to the streams during the salmon spawning season. The estimated bear population of Admiralty Island in 1932 was 900 animals.

In addition to the bears, Admiralty Island has an abundance of other wildlife resources. The small Sitka deer is numerous on all parts of the Island, and local fur-bearers include beaver, mink, land otter, muskrat, weasel, and marten. Upland game birds are ptarmigan and grouse. Migratory waterfowl are abundant in the fall. Most of the streams and lakes afford excellent trout fishing.

A report outlining the bear management plan for the Island has been prepared by B. F. Heintzleman, formerly assistant regional forester in Alaska, and H. W. Terhune, executive officer of the Alaska game commission and representative of the Biological Survey in the Territory. The report has been published as Dept. of Agriculture Miscellaneous Publication No. 195, "A Plan for the Management of Brown Bear in Relation to Other Resources on Admiralty Island, Alaska," and is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., at 5 cents per copy.